ten years' absence, I yearned to visit the Hermitage, to see again the public works I had managed as president of the Council of the Unemployed, get a glimpse of the University, take a walk along the quays of the Neva, but there never was time for anything like that.

I still looked strong, but inside me something was caving in under the self-imposed pressure of work. These months were even harder on Emma. She worked in the information department of *Izvestia*, covering the activities of different bureaus in the Tauride Palace. We had an apartment not very far from the palace but saw little of each other. We spent only one Sunday together when, for some reason, my commitments for that day were canceled. I suggested that we go by train to visit my parents. I hoped the memories of my childhood and early youth attached to that place would revive, come back to life. The place, however, was dead for both of us, but at least we were together, far from the turmoil of politics. We compared our impressions of what was going on around us. Our life in the new, democratic Russia, at the hub of historical events, seemed empty in comparison with Irkutsk.

Emma was as tired of the Tauride Palace as I. We felt that our group was engaged in a desperate defense of a lost cause, that whatever it was doing did not matter. It did have two major victories to its credit—the first over the defeatism of Miliukov, the second over the demagoguery of Lenin. But what was left to us to defend in Petrograd? An *opéra-bouffe* government that we ourselves had invested with the title of Government of National Salvation but that had no strength, no vision, no courage, and no prestige.

We had no personal plans for the future and felt we were drifting with the tempestuous stream of the revolution. We returned to Petrograd with a feeling of resignation, but Emma did not suggest that I quit my political activity nor did I give any thought to such a possibility. I thought only of moving from the Tauride Palace to some other field of work.

In this mood I talked a few days later with Stankevich, with whom I had worked in Petrazhitsky's seminar in 1904-5. Since then he had become professor of law, had joined the army, and had been elected to the Petrograd Soviet by the officers of his battalion. He was the only officer in the Soviet and one of the leaders of the moderate group in the Executive Committee. On political questions he was right of center, his main interest being the army. Then he quietly disappeared from the Tauride Palace. When I met him again he was serving as the Commissar of the government and of the Executive Committee on the Northern Front.

When he heard that I was tired of my work in the Tauride Palace, he asked me whether I would like to go with him to the front. I